

SOCIAL ACTION

**Will the
CHURCH
Demand
RACIAL
JUSTICE?**

by

**Hubert Herring
Norman Thomas
Harold Kingsley
Allan Chalmers
and others**



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SOCIAL ACTION

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Justice For The Negro

• by Hubert C. Herring

The race question is America's knottiest issue. Our national complacency is given the lie by our handling of the American Negro.

That Negro is an American. His Americanism is of longer standing than that of the majority of us who are white. His forefathers came to America at a time when many of ours were still living in England and Germany and Ireland. He is no alien. He is here to stay.

The Negro, American of so long standing, accounting for twelve million of the total population, is deliberately and continuously thrust aside from the national table. In many areas he cannot vote. Disenfranchised, his rights as a citizen are rudely denied. He is discriminated against in education. In many states, his schools get the leavings of public budgets; his teachers are often paid starvation wages.

He is denied even-handed justice, much of the time, both in the North and in the South. He is denied equal access to public institutions—hotels, restaurants, street cars, railroads, theaters. He is discriminated against in employment offices. "The last to be hired, the first to be fired" is the substantially true indictment. The Negro stenographer, bookkeeper and accountant is given no semblance of a chance, North or South. The aspirant for professional training is blocked all along the way. Medical schools, law schools make his way hard. The bulk of hospitals are closed to him. Internships for Negro medical students are almost non-existent. The Negro physician must be twice as skilful as his white brother in order to get an equal chance.

The Negro in America, solemnly enfranchised by the amendments to the Constitution of the United States, is still given a slave status.

These things America has done, and is doing, to the Negro, and all with an air of lofty tolerance and benign condescen-

sion. It is not the issue of North versus South. The North, confronted with the issues, behaves as the South has always behaved. We do not use the same phrases, but it comes to the same thing. The Negro is bidden to keep in his place.

Add to Kindness—Justice

Two words must be kept in mind as we contemplate the future of race relations in the United States—kindness and justice.

Of kindness, there has been much. There was kindness in the old plantation days—ininitely more kindness than exists today in the social institution of cotton sharecropping, the successor to the plantation system. There was a wealth of kindness in the relations between masters and slaves, in spite of the exceptions only too obvious. There has been kindness, oceans of it, since the Civil War.

This kindness has represented the outgoing of human feeling for a simple and kindly people, provided they kept in their place. That place was a menial place, a humble place, a place of gratitude toward white benefactors. America has said, is saying, to the Negro, in effect: "You are a lower form of mankind, destined to be the hewers of wood and the carriers of water. Stick to those jobs, and we will like you. Aspire to other jobs, and we will kick you out."

Kindness is sinfully inadequate. Justice is a better word. The Negroes, trained in the schools created and supported by Northern generosity, are increasingly demanding justice rather than kindness. They ask not a tip—the symbol of condescending kindness—but a wage, the symbol of justice. They ask, demand, a fair break in the economic life of the nation, the chance to work and to earn and to spend without discrimination. They demand a fair deal before the law, the opportunity to exercise their citizenship, the assurance of even-handed treatment by the courts. They demand that honest equality of opportunity contemplated by the founding fathers.

These demands of the new Negro may be put aside by a stubborn intolerance. They may for a time be successfully resisted by powerful forces. But in the long run, these demands must be met if the health of the nation is to be assured. The nation cannot exist, half slave, half free.

What can the churches do in this perplexing and threatening area of human relations? First and foremost, we can keep on doing what we have already done so well: Support the American Missionary Association. Its institutions merit the pride of every Congregationalist. They are shining centers of American hope. They are training the Negro leaders who will serve their people, who will serve us all. There has been so much questioning of organized church activity that I esteem it a privilege to attest the excellence of that program. I should like to add a word about the man who gives character and power to it—Fred Brownlee. The stuff of prophecy and of generalship is in him. We should strengthen his hands.

Make Negro's Problem Church's Problem

Next, we must make the Congregational and Christian churches luminous in their stand for full justice to the Negro. If the courts deny citizenship rights to the Negro—whether it be in Alabama or in Illinois—their fight is our fight. We must find ways of reaching out a tangible hand of helpfulness where the threat appears. If the Negro is discriminated against, wherever it may be, it is our fight. When hotels and theaters insult a Negro, they insult us. When hospitals refuse to accept a Negro, they refuse us. When colleges and universities play false to the Negro, they play false to us. The churches must find effective ways of protesting, of making their protests eventuate in action.

There are three kinds of social change to which the church can contribute.

First, the church can pioneer in the changing of attitudes. American race relations will improve as men improve. When

people are cured of the easy insolence which consigns twelve million Americans to incurable inferiority, there will be hope. A Christian church can help to meet that situation. But it cannot do it, so long as we insist upon working in a vacuum. Until white and black groups work together, the chasm will remain.

Secondly, the church will have a hand in changing the economic patterns which perpetuate the ancient blunders. The church can and should throw its influence against the barring of employment offices to Negroes. The church numbers among its membership thousands of employers. Let the church say to those employers, "Give the Negro an even chance; do not bar him because of his color." Let the church make the request concrete and definite, in terms of actual people and actual situations. One instance of one trained Negro placed in a definite position will become the test from which others will learn.

Thirdly, the church can make its influence felt in the meeting of national issues in which the Negro is involved. The plight of the Negro cotton sharecroppers is a national problem. The church cannot be indifferent. National measures to meet national needs will come when the nation is aroused. The church must contribute to the making of the national mind.

The Council for Social Action seeks to serve the churches in the whole range of such a racial program. It seeks to furnish help in the framing of community programs. It seeks funds with which to launch at least two definite projects in national activity: one in the field of civil liberties, the other in the field of the sharecroppers.

The time has come for a new kind of missionary. He will be more of an *attorney* for the weak than an *almoner* to the weak. He will serve in the Interpreter's House, exercising the infinitely difficult but tragically needed ministry of reconciliation. It is time that the churches step out into these new areas in which the watchword will be justice.

Scottsboro Boys In Fourth Trial

• by Allen Knight Chalmers

That nightmare case, the Scottsboro boys, is up again for the fourth time in five years. Patterson, the first man to be tried in this, as in other trials, has been convicted and sentenced to seventy-five years in prison as this article goes to press. The fact that he did not again get the death sentence is the first evidence that the case is breaking. To those who have not followed the matter, this verdict will seem like a queer victory over which to rejoice. But to others it is the first real ray of hope that the boys can eventually be freed.

There are so many angles in the case that it is difficult to view it dispassionately, but we ought to try. On certain facts there is general agreement. It is what to do about them that troubles people South and North.

We start with an opinion with which every person South and North, with whom I have talked, agrees: *the boys are not guilty of the crime for which they are being tried*. How any one can read Judge Horton's opinion in which he set aside the verdict of the jury in the second trial as being contrary to the evidence, and have the slightest doubt of their innocence in this instance, is more than I can see. (That opinion has been printed in pamphlet form and, though it is supposed to sell for five cents, I'll send a free copy to any of our readers who request it.)

Innocence Generally Admitted

I judge not only by this opinion, however, but by the fact that in all these years, when I regularly spend a week in Alabama, speaking and on church business, I have not yet met a single person, white or black, rich or poor, educated or un-

trained, who has thought them guilty. Why, then, do they not receive acquittals?

Changing an old metaphor, *it is the tragic story of the man who caught a lion by the tail*. However much we may deplore it, we do not understand the tragic dilemma of this case unless we realize how fundamental to the Southerner is this sense of outraged dignity. It has become a front-line trench for some of them.

Equally, however, it has become a symbol—a grimly tragic symbol—for the whole Negro race. If the boys die, with them a racial hope dies. In their cause is wrapped up such a seemingly simple thing—to stand as men equal before the law. To have them hope despairingly for simple justice, a fair trial, and to be once more denied it, is pathetic beyond words.

The Story in Brief

The incident, which makes the simple case, is an old one for the South. Nine Negro boys riding on a freight train were accused of rape by two overalled white girls, also on the loose; and those Negroes were, as a matter of course, convicted as guilty. The testimony of the white girls, that this was so, was enough—or in this case too much. The boys were on their way out. They were riding a new train this time and “going west.” At that moment outside help from Negro and civil liberty organizations came into the picture.

If outside help had not intervened, the boys would now be dead. Southerners, resenting Northern interference and claiming that it dooms the boys, will admit that when you remind them. The thing they remember without being reminded is that these organizations are radical, outside, and Northern. Various defense organizations came into the case and, after milling around for a while, the control finally rested in the Interna-

tional Labor Defense, a communist organization which retained Samuel Leibowitz, not himself a communist but a successful New York defense lawyer who happens to be a Jew.

To have a Northern, New York, Jewish lawyer paid by a communist organization attempting to set aside a conviction of Negro boys accused by white girls of the crime of rape was bad enough. But when this lawyer, after an adverse decision, made some scathing personal remarks about the Southern jurymen, Ossa was piled on Pelion.

In spite of these emotional handicaps, twice the cases went to the Supreme Court with a new trial ordered. Once Judge Horton set aside the verdict as contrary to evidence.

You see now why it is the case of having a lion by the tail. One of the girls renounces her testimony as false. More careful investigation results in a Southern white judge, although



up for reelection in the near future, compelled by the weight of evidence to set aside the guilty verdict as impossible. The credibility of the remaining accuser is seriously weakened by facts brought out in the courts of law. Those things make no difference. The South does what Massachusetts did in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Between firmly set teeth the words are heard, "They shall not go free."

The present Defense Committee is trying to resolve this impasse. Only one out of six organizations comprising the Committee is communist. The treasurer is William J. Schieffelin, head of the Board of Trustees at Tuskegee. Southern counsel of standing has been secured to handle the case actively. *The Committee is concentrating on one thing only—to do anything that will give the boys their freedom.*

Why We Carry On

It looks as if the end of the case is far away. The former prosecuting attorney, who now is Lieutenant Governor, is determined not to give up on a case which may mean much in his political future. Alabama is resentful and sick of the case, but can scarcely "save face" if the boys are now acquitted. *It seems clear that ground for successful appeal to the Supreme Court is again ample. The weary round begins again.*

Why, then, keep on? First, because the boys are presumably innocent of the crime alleged. Second, because the case has now become a symbol for the Negro people. They have suffered so long because they are black! They would like even this faint glimmer of hope that we shall ever treat them as human. Third, because the white race will be dishonored if we let the innocent be sacrificed because they are black.

These are good reasons for the church to be concerned in this example of Social Action.

Sharecroppers: Black and White

• by Norman Thomas

Evictions, beatings, near-lynchings once more make the cotton country in Arkansas a storm center. Once again there is an opportunity for the churches to throw their weight in the scales for common decency and civil liberty if not for Christianity in the region where exploitation is perhaps the worst in America.

The churches have something to atone for. One of the darkest chapters in their history was written by their attitude toward slavery, especially toward the monstrous African slave trade and the "peculiar institution" of black chattel slavery in the United States. In many of its essentials that chapter of shame is continuing in the cotton country, with white as well as black sharecroppers and agricultural workers as its victims. And, in the main, the churches still support the *status quo*. The principal apologist not only for the system but for the planters of eastern Arkansas in their attempt to put down the Southern Tenant Farmers Union by sheer terrorism is none other than the Rev. J. Abner Sage, pastor of a leading church in Marked Tree, Arkansas.

The plain truth is that King Cotton rules now, as before the Civil War, over undernourished slaves. The sharecropper is a man possessed of literally nothing but his own and his family's labor. He lives in a shack unfit for animals, on food that nourishes pellagra, not men. He is always in bondage to a system in which for eight or nine months in the year he lives on what the planter "furnishes" him at an advance over normal prices of ten to twenty percent. When the time for settlement has come, from the cropper's half of the sale price of the cotton the landlord deducts not only these advances but a charge for fencing and drainage. All too often he figures with a "crooked pencil" so that for the sharecropper the net

result of the season's toil is new debt. He is supervised by armed riding bosses against whom, especially if he is a Negro, he has no rights. He may be killed with less inquiry than if he were a hunting dog.

A Simple, Submerged Life

If the status of this field worker is that of day laborer rather than sharecropper, it is in no way better. He has to live on wages running 50, 60, 75 cents, rarely a dollar a day. And he never has employment 300 days a year. Free education has almost no meaning. Schools are few, poor, and far between. At busy seasons the children work in the fields, and anyway they don't have clothes to go to school.

Liquor, sex, and camp meetings are the principal diversions. In their churches the colored people have at least learned something about organizing and working together. As a rule the white sharecropper has not had this lesson. If he goes to church at all—except for camp meetings and revivals—it is to a church run by his bosses. His role is passive.



Now we must look for an explanation for this situation, which clearly affects millions of human beings in the ten principal cotton states of the South, not primarily to some personal or geographical villain but rather to economics and history. The plantation system goes back to

the beginning of English colonization in America. It still casts a long dark shadow not only over agriculture but over industry.

The fratricidal Civil War gave Negro slaves legal freedom. It gave them no land at all, and it left all the old legacies of hate not only between master and slave but between ex-slave and poor white. The present plantation system was a natural evolution from post-war conditions: land owners without money or slaves; former slaves without money, land or tools.

The fact that during most of the years since the Civil War cotton has been a poverty crop, sold in world markets at a price insufficient to provide the workers who produce it with a decent living, has effectually prevented any easy development of higher standards. The churches, supported mostly by the landowners or the town folks, have gone along, raising no uncomfortable questions, very much as in slave days.

Messrs. Roosevelt, Wallace, Tugwell, Davis, and others, inherited this situation. They did not make it. They also inherited a political dependence on the Democratic Party in the South, which party, to put it mildly, never has championed sharecroppers and field workers. Half of them are black and of the other half, many are disqualified from voting by the poll tax. No wonder, then, that the Administration has done nothing to give these folk a New Deal. On the contrary, in many respects, the now defunct AAA made things worse. And Secretary Wallace refused to seat a representative of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union at his conference to plan



Courtesy *The Crisis*

for a substitute for the AAA. He said they wouldn't be affected by it!

Briefly AAA affected the relations of planters and sharecroppers as follows: (1) It gave easy credit to landlords, $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 6%, but none at all to tenants, who still paid the landlord 10 to 20 cents advance on the dollar for all he "furnished" them. (2) It reduced the number of sharecroppers by its program of paying landlords for not planting cotton. This threw thousands into the army of the unemployed. In some cases AAA made it profitable to turn sharecroppers into casual day laborers. The government's protection to the sharecroppers was either non-existent or a hypocritical farce.

Against this iniquity the churches, for the most part, held their peace.

One sign of hope is the beginning of organization of these people, white and colored together, since they have common problems and woes. In Alabama the beginning of organization has been met by murder. In Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas the Southern Tenant Farmers Union has fared better. There the union has some 15,000 members.

But now the storm has broken. A new crop of evictions has sent families out on the road without shelter, clothing, food, even denied the right to fire-wood. That fine Christian leader, Howard Kester—we use the words in their highest sense—was almost lynched at a recent meeting of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union near Earle, Arkansas. Men, women and children were beaten with blackjacks. So matters stand as this is written.

What have the churches to say? Especially what have the Protestant churches to say? These people, white and colored, worship the same God by the same rites. They go to churches similar in faith and doctrine. In this cotton country, if anywhere, the churches can show whether they have a social gospel of power—or any gospel at all with any meaning for brotherhood.

Brotherhood Fails In Harlem

• by Alfred Schmalz

In Harlem a Negro boy stole a pen-knife. Store officials caught him, then let him go. Meanwhile somebody had started a rumor. It was said that the boy was being held in a store basement—beaten, tortured, murdered! Crowds stirred restlessly on the streets. Growing certainty that harm must have come to the boy moved the people to frenzy. All evening and night of March 19-20, 1935 there was rioting. A few persons were killed, scores injured. Plate glass windows worth \$150,000 were broken.

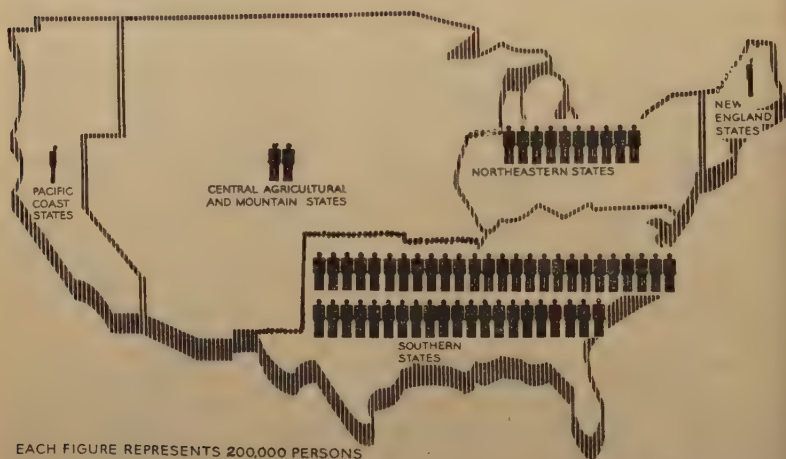
Can it be that this is simply the reverse of what happens in the South when rumor spreads that a white woman has been attacked? Superficially it looks like a race riot but actually race played a minor part. The stores broken into belonged to Negroes, as well as to white owners. The only satisfactory explanation of the violence lies in the set of discriminatory conditions to which Negroes in Harlem are subjected. A match had been thrown into a powder-magazine long prepared. Harlem simply exploded.

Explosions like this are symptoms—of unrest, injustice. When brotherhood breaks down, violence breaks out in angry reply. More police on the streets of the Harlems of America won't do. The only effective answer is deep-seated repentance and the abolition of Jim-Crow conditions.

A look at life in Harlem shows that glaring injustice exists. Take, first, the school situation.

Harlem has long been predominantly Negro. But in 1924 the great exodus from the South made it the greatest single area of Negro life to be found anywhere in the world. However, in spite of the increased density of population, not one new elementary school was erected. Today in half of the

NEGRO POPULATION IN 1930



elementary schools there are 40 to 50 pupils to a class. Most of the schools have two, and in some cases, three sessions.

The hospitalization problem is even more acute. There is only one hospital in Harlem. Its bed capacity of 325 serves a neighborhood of 200,000 Negroes. Naturally there is serious over-crowding. In 1934 the average daily attendance was 393. There are cots in the hallways. Even stretchers and chairs are used as beds.

Other factors also enter into the story behind the riot—police violence in disregard of civil liberties, discrimination in the administration of relief, bad housing, indefensibly high rentals, insufficient recreational facilities. Not least is the unequal and excessive depression burden borne by Negroes.

Even in prosperous years Negroes earn less than white workers. In 1929 the median income of Harlem families was \$1,808. An investigation by the Milbank Memorial Fund revealed that white workers in comparable circumstances earned

OCCUPATIONAL CONTRASTS

NATIVE WHITES

NEGROES

PROFESSIONAL



CLERICAL



BUSINESS



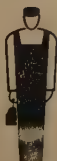
DOMESTIC SERVICE



FARM LABORERS



OTHER LABORERS



Since the preponderance of Negro workers find only laboring jobs open to them, some have concluded that their chief hope lies in labor organizations.

Each Figure = 4% of Workers of Given Race

a median income of \$2,502. As he earned less in good times, so the Negro has borne a disproportionate share of economic loss in bad times. In certain sections of Harlem there is no less than 70 percent unemployment. From 1929 to 1932 the Negro's income fell 43.6 percent. The white worker suffered, but not so severely. His decline in family income was only 32.5 percent.

Harlem is but a sample. Everywhere Negroes are discriminated against because they are black. The fact of discrimination is clear. What should be just as clear is the resolve of the churches to end so flagrant a violation of brotherhood. At present there is a hollowness in the churches' prayerful pretensions.

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Dark Days For Chicago's Negro

• by Harold Kingsley

An obvious development of the depression is the shrinkage of economic opportunity for Negroes, their unemployment, poverty and suffering. Last fall, Administrator Harry Hopkins said that out of the 20,000,000 people on relief 4,000,000 were Negroes, that is, less than one-tenth of our population furnished one-fifth of our relief load. In addition there is a revolution of the cotton industry with a one-third reduction in the cotton crop, with competition of foreign markets both in raw cotton and manufactured goods, with the invention of a cotton-picking machine, which will be the final step in mechanization of cotton growing. Negroes are crowding into large cities in steadily swelling numbers under conditions of depression, exactly the opposite to those obtaining during the great Negro migration to the North 20 years ago.

The most terrific problem of the Negro today is unemployment and want. In Chicago in 1930, 28 percent of the relief

load was allotted to colored people, that is, Negroes forming one-sixteenth of the population of the city received more than one-fourth of all the relief administered. We quote from the Associated Negro Press as of January, 1936: "Negroes are being affected more than any other large racial group because around 40 percent of the total colored population is on relief rolls. . . . Latest figures available, those for October of 1933, showed 115,803 of the state's 1930 census total of 328,972 Negroes getting aid. Of that number, 86,215 were in Chicago." This means that Chicago with a total population of 230,000 Negroes had about 90,000 on relief.

Problem Not Local But National

Possibly one of the great factors in this growing unemployment and want situation among Negroes is its close relation to the cotton industry in which most of the Negroes of this country are engaged either directly or indirectly. Attention is being focused on this subject by the recent publication on *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy*, by Johnson, Embree and Alexander, published by the University of North Carolina Press.

The dire straits of the Southern rural Negroes and its consequence on Northern urban Negroes is a situation that cannot be over-stressed. It is a clear demonstration of ignorance and greed combined with a false economic system. The four possible remedies suggested are: a. Cotton Reorganization, b. Starvation, c. The Dole, d. Jobs in Cities. The latter three, of course, are problems in themselves which demand immediate and unescapable attention.

There is no doubt that unemployment among Negroes is on the increase rather than decrease and some method must be devised to meet it, that is, if the Negro is to continue to be an asset rather than to become a liability to our social and economic structure.

The Negro is a newcomer, He is in a sense an alien to his new environment. He came North as an emergency worker in the days of the World War. He is unorganized and, more frequently than not, excluded from the labor unions. His segregation works toward decreasing accessibility to the jobs which he might get. Society has not yet recognized that it is much better economics to give people employment than emergency relief.

All these factors combine to put the Negro at a tremendous disadvantage in his struggle for living, both in the South and the North today. Practically all Negro organizations in some way seek to tackle these problems outright. Negro organizations, ranging from the church to the most radical organizations, have in their problems a large element of self-defense and protest. One of the most noticeable features of the psychology of the Negro is its defensive complex.

Organizations Attempt Solution

In Chicago we have organizations ranging from conservative groups to the militant, protesting, fighting groups, all aiming to elevate and stabilize, the Negro's general status.

The Y.M.C.A. is one of the oldest and strongest Negro organizations in Chicago and has a well-rounded program of usefulness. Its activities embrace both sexes. It is housed in a building which was modern 20 years ago but which is outmoded and overcrowded today. It is, however, a veritable beehive of social and educational activities.

The Urban League is a part of a national organization that just celebrated its 25th anniversary. It not only seeks to adjust the Negro population to its industrial environment but seeks to promote a better understanding between the races based on mutual knowledge, respect and appreciation. This work takes the form of special lectures and forums.

Both the Y.M.C.A. and Urban League cooperate actively

on the Annual Interracial Sunday which is usually the second Sunday in February at which time there is an interchange of pulpits between colored and white pastors. This movement has grown to large proportions in the last few years and is a part of the routine program in some of our strongest churches. It is an educational work of highest value, as well as a fine piece of cooperation among the Negro organizations, and also between the two races.

The standard organization for protest against the loss of civil rights and discrimination is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It carries on a constant educational campaign and has regular forums and lectures bringing to the South Side some of the leading minds of the country.

Another significant organization is the Citizens' Economic and Civic Welfare Council, which is a group of one hundred men drawn from every walk of life. This organization has secured from the County Board a beautiful and commodious log cabin at Taylor's Woods at Desplaines. Each month during the summer it holds an outdoor dinner with an invited guest speaker. Among their guests have been the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, the Publisher of *The Chicago Tribune*, the Publisher of the *Daily News*, the Mayor of Chicago, and President Willard of the University of Illinois. It

Good Field for Radicals

The radical organizations range all the way from communism to the various committees and unemployment councils. The communist group seems to exploit racial injustices for propaganda purposes. The racial situation is a smoke screen in which they seek to organize the Negroes of this country for the Communist party. There is not a more fruitful field for their exploration than the 12,000,000 Negroes of the United States at the present time.

In addition to this there is an increasing desire on the part

of the Negro to have their problems lumped with all other problems rather than be segregated in a separate category. The Negro is desperately anxious that his case be given every consideration, that the general rules of the games be applied to his problem and that its friends stand firmly on the basis of principle. The Negro feels that the economic situation must be solved on the basis of principle and on principle alone.

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Need For Anti-Lynching Legislation

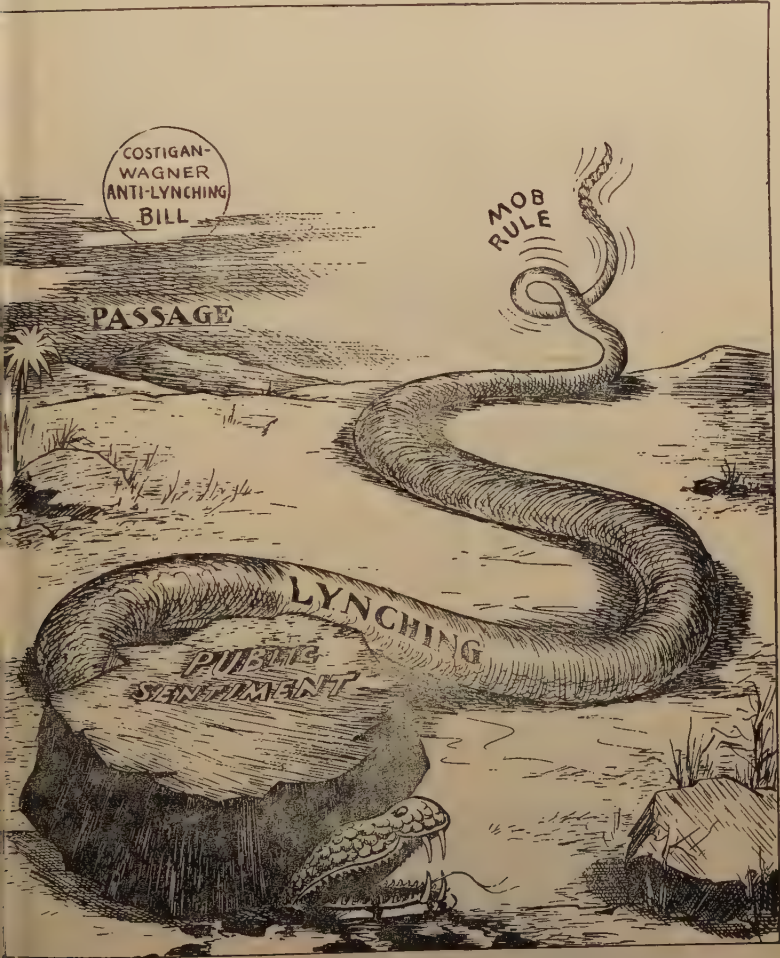
Federal anti-lynching legislation is necessary if Negroes are to be protected from mob violence and their assailants punished. In 1935 eighteen Negroes died, the victims of lynchers. Practically nothing has been done by the states themselves or by local communities to hale the responsible persons before the law.

The Wagner-Costigan Bill will substitute strength for present weakness in the administration of justice. Defeated by the last Congress, it comes before the present Congress with the support of a vast body of individuals and organizations. The Council for Social Action now, as before, is in favor of the measure. We appeal to the churches to give it their support.

Briefly, the bill provides for—

1. *The punishment of any state officer or employe who fails to protect a prisoner against a mob;*
2. *The punishment of state officers convicted of conspiracy to injure or put to death a prisoner in custody and for the punishment of those conspiring with them;*
3. *Federal prosecution of lynchers after it has been shown that state officials have failed to act or that jurors are prejudiced against the punishment of such persons;*

4. A penalty of \$2,000-\$10,000 on the county in which a lynching takes place, to be paid to the injured person or to the estate of a deceased victim.



Courtesy Pittsburgh Courier

"THE TAIL WON'T DIE 'TIL THE SUN GOES DOWN"

A recent investigation of 21 lynchings revealed the following:

Two thirds of the victims were under 25 years of age.

Only one had gone to school beyond the sixth grade.

Most of the *lynchers* also were under 25, unemployed and uneducated

Lynchings occurred in sparsely populated counties which had few social institutions.

LYNCHINGS IN THE U.S.

1926



1929



1932

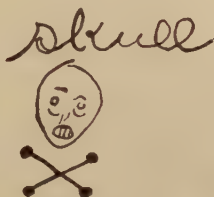


1935



Each figure represents 2 lynchings

you look good
to us



if you build a house down there
this is what you get.
you better build your house
up where the rest of the
dam niggers live
you getting too dam
rich to be a nigger.
that dam manish boy
of yours will die soon
we are only giving
you a warning.
we want to see a
nigger stay in his place.

Usually a neighbor is congratulated or envied when he is able to build a comfortable new home. Not so in the case of young Dendy, a skilled Negro carpenter in an American city.

After a life-time of building for others he decided to build a house for himself—in a part of the city with water and light.

The above letter was his white neighbor's reply. He continued with the building.

In a short time the "manish boy," who had been able to go through college, was lynched by his jealous white neighbors.

Living Conditions In Boston

Late in 1935 the New England Labor Research Association field workers collected first hand data on incomes and living conditions of Negro families in Boston and Cambridge. Of the 107 cases studied 54 were on relief at the time the information was secured. Among the single persons covered the proportion on relief was somewhat smaller than for the group as a whole, being 7 out of the 15 reported. It is also interesting to note that the number of large families was much greater for the relief than for the non-relief group.

Relief Incomes—The average relief income for all of the 54 cases covered was \$10.28 a week. This was supplemented by an average of 67c. per week from odd jobs and other miscellaneous sources. The receipt of food orders in addition to cash was reported in 16 cases and of fuel in 25. Eight families reported clothes received from relief agencies, while 9 others said that their requests for clothing had been refused.

The average relief income of \$10.28 applies to all cases and consequently covers up a considerable diversity of conditions. For single persons on relief the average income was \$4.52, for families of two, \$7.07, and for families of three \$9.50. For families of four and over the average was \$13.30 with very little variation between the smaller and larger families within this group.

Non-Relief Incomes—In the case of the 53 families which were not on relief the average income of the 8 single individuals covered was \$8.75, of families of two \$17.12, and of families of three or more \$24.12.

These incomes are for family units and consequently represent the earnings in many cases of more than one worker. In the 53 families there were 74 workers, 49 of them working full time and 25 part time. The average earnings per full time worker were \$18.06, while the part time workers averaged \$7.26. The full time average conceals a range of incomes from \$9 to \$33.

Housing—A prominent part of the questionnaires was devoted to rent and housing conditions and considerable information collected. The average rent per room paid by families on relief was \$4 per month as compared with an average of \$5.78 for non-relief families. Number of rooms per family was about the same for both relief and non-relief families ranging from an average of $2\frac{1}{4}$ rooms for single persons to 5 rooms for families of four and over. Clearly the quality of dwelling of relief families was inferior to that of families not on relief. Of the relief families interviewed 25 had changed their residence in the last two years, the majority of them to lower priced tenements.

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Negroes Turn To Cooperatives

One of the most astounding achievements of Negro groups in recent years has been in the field of consumers cooperatives. One thinks of the cooperative stores in Gary and Pittsburgh, the gasoline station at Kansas City, the dairy cooperative in Harlem—all organized and operated by Negroes.

Let us look, for example, at the story of the Gary cooperative which has grown from nothing to the largest Negro-owned store in the United States in less than three years. From their position at the foot of the economic ladder, a small group of Negroes, many of them unemployed, began with the formation of a cooperative buying club and by dint of ceaseless effort have created a cooperative grocery store which eclipses by \$10,000 the yearly volume of any privately-owned Negro store.

In January, 1932, more than one-fifth of the total population of Gary was unemployed. One half of the Negro population of 20,000 was on relief. At that time representatives of 20 families met to discuss their common problems. With a capital of \$24 a cooperative buying club was formed. By December 15th the club had grown into a full-fledged store. It had one clerk and a manager. No one on the store staff had had

any sales experience. With inexpensive equipment and a small stock of goods the cooperative was laughed at by all the merchants in the neighborhood. Today membership in the co-op has increased to 400 families and the turnover for 1935 will be more than \$35,000. A credit union has already been organized by the cooperative and plans are under way to open two branch cooperative stores and a cooperative gas station in Gary and branches in Indiana Harbor and East Chicago in succeeding years.

J. L. Reddix, president of the association, hails the cooperative as a means of economic emancipation and says, "It has been an inspiring sight to see the new spirit that comes to a lowly people when a cooperative is developed among them. Former mill hands and laborers serving on boards of directors, managing stores and controlling finance, a new hope—this is the contribution of cooperation to the solution of the problems of my people."

100 Percent American

Red McLaughlin was a member of a secret society which tried to organize a party for a lynching—

MARSAN: "Red, what does your society do, anyway . . . what's it's object?"

"We're against niggers, Catholics, and Jews," catalogued Red with intensity, "and just anything un-American."

"What is something un-American?"

"Why, you know, Marsan . . . just anything that is not American."

"Well . . . aren't lynchings un-American?"

Red was surprised.

"Marsan, what's eating you? Don't you know lynching don't occur anywhere except in America?"

T. S. Stribling, *Unfinished Cathedral*, pp. 67-8

The Outlook for Neutrality

Two neutrality bills are before Congress. One is an administration measure, prepared by the State Department and introduced by Senator Pittman and Representative McReynolds. The other is the work of Senators Nye and Clark and Representative Maverick.

Fundamentally the two bills are very similar. Both provide—

1. Embargoes and prohibitions to apply against *all* belligerents.
2. Limitation of key raw materials at the discretion of the President to normal peacetime quotas.
3. Prohibition of loans and credits.
4. Restriction of travel by American citizens on belligerent vessels.

The Nye-Clark bill goes beyond the administration measure on several points. It calls for an arms embargo to be applied at the outbreak of hostilities, rather than during the progress of a war. Quotas on essential raw materials are to be fixed at the average of shipments for the preceding five years, instead of on a basis determined at the President's discretion. Loans to belligerent nationals are prohibited, not merely loans to governments. Commercial transactions are at the risk of foreign purchasers rather than at that of American sellers.

Both bills permit the continuance of "normal" trade during war time, thus offering no guarantee against the danger of another controversy concerning neutral rights involving the United States, as it did in 1914-1917.

Sentiment against a strict neutrality program is increasing. It is attacked both by those who wish to retain our right to trade, and those who believe in the moral obligation to go to war. But this program, with all its defects, offers the only hope of keeping the United States out of the impending world conflict. Unless Congress acts now, that hope will be lost.

Selected Readings on the Negro

- Plight of the Sharecropper*, by Norman Thomas. 1934, 34 pp., 10c.
Struggle for Civil Liberty on the Land, by American Civil Liberties Union. 1935, 48 pp., 10c.
Cotton-Growing Communities, Study No. 1, by Benson Y. Landis & George E. Haynes. 1934, 43 pp., 25c. A case study of 9 rural communities and 30 plantations in Alabama.
Cotton-Growing Communities, Study No. 2, by Benson Y. Landis & George E. Haynes. 1935, 47 pp., 15c.
The Herndon Case, by Federal Council of Churches. 1935.
Wisdom, Justice and Moderation, by Joint Committee to Aid Herndon Defense. 1935, 15 pp., 2c.

PERIODICALS:

- Tightening the Cotton Belt*, by Powell and Cutler. *Harpers*, Feb., 1934.
Diminishing Family Income in Harlem, by C. V. Kiser. *Opportunity*, June, 1935.
It Happened One Night, by Shelton Hale Bishop. *Fight*, May, 1935.
Slumbering Fires in Harlem, by O. G. Villard. *Nation*, Jan. 22, 1936.
The Social Security Act, by A. Epstein. *Crisis*, Nov., 1935.
Can States Stop Lynching? *Crisis*, Jan., 1936.
The Negro and the Closed Shop, by Loren P. Miller. *Opportunity*, June, 1935.
Negro Separate School, by C. H. Thompson. *Crisis*, August, 1935.
South of Scottsboro, by Ben Cothran. *Forum*, June, 1935.

BOOKS:

- The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy*, by C. S. Johnson and others. University of North Carolina, 1935, \$1.00.
Black Reconstruction, by W. E. B. DuBois. Harcourt, 1935, \$4.50. Distinguished by a wealth of fact, careful documentation and clear style.
Divine White Right, by Trevor Brown. *Harpers*, 1934, \$1.75. Part by Ira De A. Reid deals with the Church and Education for Negroes.
Tragedy of Lynching, by Arthur Raper. University of North Carolina, 1933, \$2.50. "No other book on lynching has probed so deeply as this or set forth conclusions so fearlessly."

Plymouth Peace Play Contest

*(Sponsored by the Council for Social Action of the
Congregational and Christian Churches)*

WANTED: a one-act play on the general theme of peace. The scene of the play may be located in any place, at any time, depicting any situation, but obviously the play should have implications pertinent to the present world need. The theme may be developed from the international, inter-racial, economic, or religious aspect of peace.

There is no limit to the number of characters, but the play is for amateur performance and should be written with that fact in mind. It may be any length, preferably under one hour's playing time.

The judges of the contest will be:

Whitford Kane, actor and producer, New York City
Robert Morss Lovett, University of Chicago and Hull
House

Louise Leonard Wright, former president, National
League of Women Voters

Walter H. Baker Company, Boston, who are specializing in distinctive peace plays, will pay to the playwright of the winning play one hundred dollars and will make publishing arrangements with the authors of such other of the plays submitted as meet their needs. The winning play will be published without royalty fee. It is expected that the prize play will have its premiere showing at the General Conference of Congregational and Christian Churches at Holyoke, Massachusetts, in June, 1936.

The cost of production and promotion will be borne by the Young Peoples Organization of Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The contest closes April 20, 1936.

Address all plays:

Plymouth Peace Play Contest
5757 University Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

What Does The Negro Want?

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The following statement of objectives is the "Negro Bill of Rights" recently drafted for the forthcoming National Negro Congress, meeting in Chicago.

1. **JOB.** The right of Negroes to jobs at decent living wages and for the right to join all trade unions.
2. **SOCIAL SECURITY.** Relief and security for every needy Negro family; and, for genuine social and unemployment insurance without discrimination.
3. **FARM RELIEF.** Aid to the Negro farm population; for the right of farmers, tenants and sharecroppers to organize and bargain collectively.
4. **CIVIL LIBERTIES.** A fight against lynching, mob violence and police brutality; for enactment of a federal anti-lynching law; for the right to vote, serve on juries and enjoy complete civil liberty.
5. **EDUCATION.** The right of Negro youth to equal opportunity in education and in the economic life of the community.
6. **WOMEN'S RIGHTS.** For complete equality for Negro women; with equal pay for equal work; for their right to organize as consumers.
7. **ETHIOPIAN INDEPENDENCE.** To oppose war and fascism, and the attempted subjugation of Negro people in Ethiopia.